

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln. No. 09/680,419
Attorney Docket No.: Q60879

REMARKS

Claims 9-14, 18, and 19 are all the claims pending in the Application. By this Amendment, Applicant cancels claims 1-8 and 15-17. Moreover, Applicant amends claim 9 to include the features of claims 15 and 16 and rewrites claim 19 into its independent form.

By this Amendment, Applicant also editorially amends claims 18 and 19 to cure a minor informality. This amendment to claims 18 and 19 was made for reasons of consistency, and does not narrow the literal scope of the claims and thus does not implicate an estoppel in the application of the doctrine of equivalents. The amendment to claims 18 and 19 was not made for reasons of patentability.

Summary of the Office Action

In this Final Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 16 and 19 contain allowable subject matter. With respect to the remaining claims, the Examiner objected to claims 18 and 19 for minor informality, rejected claims 9, 10, 12-15, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102, and rejected claims 1-8, 11, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Objection to the Claims

Claims 18 and 19 are objected to for minor informalities. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw these objections in view of self-explanatory claim amendments being made herein.

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Prior Art Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 9, 10, 12-15, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and claims 1-8, 11, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claims 1-8, 15, and 17 have been canceled. Therefore, these rejections are rendered moot with respect to these claims.

With respect to the remaining rejected claims 9-14 and 18, only claim 9 is independent. Claim 9 has been amended to recite the features of the allowable claim 16 and its intervening claim 15. In view thereof, it is appropriate and necessary for the Examiner to withdraw this rejection of claim 9 and its dependent claims 10-14 and 18.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 16 and 19 contains allowable subject. Claim 16 now corresponds to claim 9 and claim 19 is rewritten into its independent form. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to allow all claims pending in the application.


Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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